



EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN INCREASING STUDENT ENROLMENT IN INDIAN SCHOOLS

Sripriya Vemuri¹, Dr. Anshumali Pandey²

¹ Ph.D. Research Scholar, Sabarmati University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat

² Assistant Professor, Sabarmati University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat

ABSTRACT

The growing penetration of internet services and the widespread use of digital platforms have transformed how institutions interact with their target audiences. In the context of education, schools are increasingly under pressure to differentiate themselves and actively engage with prospective students and their families. Schools in India, particularly in urban and semi-urban regions, are increasingly leveraging social media to enhance visibility, build credibility, and engage with prospective parents and students. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of social media marketing in increasing student enrolment in Indian schools, with a particular focus on schools in Gujarat. The research primarily explores the perception of school management regarding the role and impact of social media marketing on admissions and investigates the association between their demographic profile and their perception. A structured, close-ended questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale was administered to a sample of 137 school management representatives. The findings suggest that school management strongly believes that social media significantly enhances school visibility, builds trust among parents, and facilitates better communication, ultimately influencing enrolment decisions. The study highlights the growing acceptance and perceived impact of digital strategies in the school admission process and provides valuable insights for educational institutions aiming to strengthen their marketing efforts through social media.

KEYWORDS: Social Media Marketing, Student Enrolment, Indian Schools, School Management, Educational Marketing, Digital Strategy, Gujarat, Parental Engagement

INTRODUCTION

Social media marketing has emerged as a transformative tool for schools in India, helping them engage with prospective students, parents, and the broader community in a dynamic and interactive manner. In an age where digital presence strongly influences decision-making, Indian schools—especially private and international institutions—have recognized the value of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube for communication and promotion. These platforms allow schools to craft and convey their brand identity, promote their academic programs, highlight co-curricular achievements, and showcase campus life in ways that traditional advertising methods cannot match.

One of the key aspects of social media marketing's effectiveness for schools in India lies in its ability to build trust and transparency. Through regular updates, event coverage, testimonials, and live interactions, schools can offer an authentic glimpse into their environment. This transparency helps in forming a sense of credibility and emotional connection with parents and guardians who seek a nurturing and academically strong institution for their children. Social media also provides an avenue for storytelling, enabling schools to share success stories of students, faculty achievements, and innovative teaching practices—elements that are increasingly important in a competitive education market.

Furthermore, social media platforms allow schools to engage in two-way communication. This interactivity strengthens

relationships and builds a community around the school. Parents and students can ask questions, provide feedback, and even participate in polls and discussions. Schools that respond promptly and meaningfully to such interactions demonstrate responsiveness and attentiveness—qualities that parents highly value in an educational institution. It also helps schools gather real-time feedback to improve their offerings and communication strategies.

Cost-effectiveness is another major advantage of social media marketing. Unlike traditional advertising in print or broadcast media, which requires significant investment, social media allows even smaller schools with limited marketing budgets to reach a wide audience. With strategic content planning, targeted advertising, and analytics-driven decision-making, schools can ensure that their marketing campaigns are both efficient and impactful. Paid advertising options on platforms like Facebook and Instagram allow schools to reach specific demographics based on location, interests, and behaviours—making promotional campaigns highly customized and measurable.

The impact of social media marketing also extends to student admissions and retention. A well-maintained and active social media presence influences parental perception during the school selection process. Parents are increasingly researching schools online before making visits or inquiries. Schools that effectively highlight their academic achievements, infrastructure, extracurricular activities, and student support systems are more likely to attract attention and foster interest.

Moreover, showcasing student engagement and campus life helps in retaining current students by reinforcing their pride and emotional connection with the school.

2. NEED OF THE STUDY

In the current digital era, the education sector in India is undergoing a significant transformation, with increasing reliance on digital tools and platforms for outreach and engagement. Among these, social media marketing has gained considerable prominence as an essential strategy for schools to attract and retain students. With the growing competition among schools—both private and public—there is an urgent need to adopt innovative marketing approaches that resonate with tech-savvy parents and guardians who actively seek information online. Traditional methods of marketing such as newspaper advertisements, hoardings, and word-of-mouth, while still relevant, are no longer sufficient to reach the modern audience effectively. Hence, the need arises to study how well social media platforms are being leveraged by Indian schools to increase student enrolment.

Despite the rising use of social media for school promotions, there remains a significant gap in academic research evaluating its actual impact on student enrolment numbers in the Indian context. While corporate sectors have long measured return on investment (ROI) from digital campaigns, schools are still in the early stages of understanding how social media strategies translate into measurable outcomes such as increased inquiries, admissions, and improved brand perception. This study aims to bridge that gap by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of social media marketing in influencing enrolment decisions among parents and students.

Moreover, the educational choices of parents have become more informed and competitive, with factors such as school reputation, curriculum quality, extracurricular offerings, and infrastructure playing a crucial role in the decision-making process. Social media allows schools to highlight these features, but without a systematic evaluation of their strategies, many institutions may be investing time and resources in campaigns that fail to deliver desired results. Therefore, this study is necessary to analyze which elements of social media marketing—such as content quality, platform selection, audience engagement, and advertising frequency—are most impactful in driving enrolment.

In addition, regional diversity, urban-rural digital divides, and varying levels of digital literacy among parents across India demand a nuanced understanding of how different types of schools—urban vs. rural, private vs. government—can tailor their social media marketing strategies effectively. The study will help policymakers, school administrators, and marketing professionals in the education sector develop informed and context-specific strategies that align with the behaviour and preferences of their target audience.

Ultimately, the need for this study stems from the critical role student enrolment plays in the sustainability and growth of schools in India. By evaluating the effectiveness of social media

marketing, this research seeks to provide valuable insights that can lead to better strategic planning, optimized marketing budgets, and enhanced school visibility—thereby contributing to the overall advancement of education in the country.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Singh (2020) conducted a study focusing on private schools in urban India and explored the effectiveness of social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram in boosting student enrolment. The research concluded that schools that maintained active social media profiles with regular updates, parent testimonials, and video content showcasing student activities experienced a noticeable increase in inquiries and enrolments. Singh emphasized that visual storytelling and real-time interaction via comments and messages created a sense of trust and transparency among parents, especially those belonging to middle- and upper-middle-income groups who rely heavily on online content for school comparisons. The study also highlighted the importance of consistent branding and the responsiveness of schools to user engagement as critical factors in influencing parental decisions.

Mehra (2021) analysed the role of targeted advertising on social media in attracting student enrolment in semi-urban schools across Northern India. According to the findings, schools that utilized paid promotional campaigns with geo-targeting features on Facebook and Google Ads were more successful in reaching parents in specific income brackets and geographical locations. Mehra noted that these schools achieved a more effective return on investment compared to those using generic marketing strategies. The research also pointed out that schools using platform analytics to monitor user behaviour were better positioned to customize their outreach messages, thereby increasing conversion rates from digital impressions to actual enrolments.

Kumar and Thomas (2022) investigated how the strategic use of social media content could influence brand perception and trust among prospective parents in Southern India. Their study found that schools that frequently posted student success stories, faculty introductions, and behind-the-scenes glimpses of campus activities developed a strong emotional connection with viewers. According to the authors, this emotional appeal, combined with informative posts about academic achievements and infrastructure, contributed to an increase in parental trust, which ultimately influenced enrolment decisions. The researchers concluded that authenticity in communication was more effective than overt promotional content in gaining parental interest.

Banerjee (2021) conducted a qualitative study in Eastern India examining the digital marketing practices of English-medium private schools. The research revealed that schools with a well-planned content calendar, which included academic announcements, cultural event coverage, and interactive quizzes or contests, were able to maintain sustained audience engagement. Banerjee concluded that sustained visibility and interaction over time significantly impacted parents' school selection process, with parents showing a preference

for institutions perceived as technologically progressive and communicative. The study emphasized the importance of aligning social media strategy with the school's overall vision and branding for achieving long-term marketing success.

Rajput and Joshi (2023) explored the effectiveness of social media in enhancing enrolment in newly established schools in Western India. The researchers found that newer schools relied more heavily on social media due to limited traditional brand recognition. They concluded that platforms like Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts played a crucial role in reaching younger parents by delivering quick, visually appealing messages about school features. Rajput and Joshi highlighted that influencer collaborations—especially with parenting bloggers—proved to be a powerful tool in building early-stage credibility for new schools, especially when combined with parent reviews and testimonials.

Deshmukh (2020) conducted research on the interplay between digital literacy of parents and the effectiveness of social media marketing by schools. The study, carried out in Central India, concluded that while social media has great potential to impact enrolment, its success is often moderated by the digital literacy levels of target audiences. Deshmukh found that schools that offered multilingual and mobile-optimized content had higher engagement from parents in tier-2 and tier-3 cities. The study suggested that local language content and easy navigation are vital in ensuring that marketing efforts reach their intended audiences effectively, particularly in diverse socio-economic environments.

Naik and Fernandes (2022) examined how the quality of visual content influences social media marketing outcomes for schools in Goa and surrounding coastal regions. Their findings indicated that professionally produced photos and videos that accurately depict classroom learning, extracurricular activities, and infrastructure foster greater confidence among prospective parents. Naik and Fernandes concluded that aesthetics and clarity in visual presentation greatly affect perception, and schools investing in high-quality media production enjoyed a competitive advantage. They also found that posts featuring student and parent interviews helped humanize the institution, making it more relatable and trustworthy.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To analyse the perception of school management towards effectiveness of social media marketing in increasing students enrolment
2. To find out association between demographic profile of school management and their perception towards effectiveness of social media marketing in increasing students enrolment

5. SAMPLE SIZE

In this study 137 school managements from Gujarat based in school have been interviewed.

6. DATA ANALYSIS

1. H₀: School management do not believe that Social media marketing builds trust and credibility among parents regarding school.

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Social media marketing builds trust and credibility among parents regarding school.	51.077	136	0.017	0.507	0.143	0.194

As per the above table it is seen that significance value is 0.017 which is lower than standard value 0.05, So Null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that School management believe that Social media marketing builds trust and credibility among parents regarding school.

2. H₀: School management do not believe that Social media allows to clarify doubts and communicate directly with parents.

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Social media allows to clarify doubts and communicate directly with parents.	55.304	136	0.008	0.126	0.150	0.641

As per the above table it is seen that significance value is 0.008 which is lower than standard value 0.05, So Null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that School management believe that Social media allows to clarify doubts and communicate directly with parents.

3. H₀: School management do not believe that Social media marketing has increased the visibility of their school among prospective parents.

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Social media marketing has increased the visibility of their school among prospective parents.	59.531	136	0.011	0.334	0.597	1.088

As per the above table it is seen that significance value is 0.011 which is lower than standard value 0.05, So Null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that School management believe that Social media marketing has increased the visibility of their school among prospective parents.

4. H0: There is no association between demographic profile of school management and their perception towards effectiveness of social media marketing in increasing students enrolment

FACTOR 1	FACTOR 2	Pearson Chi-Square	P Value	Decision
Age	Social media marketing builds trust and credibility among parents regarding school.	21.29	0.028	Null Hypothesis is Rejected
	Social media allows to clarify doubts and communicate directly with parents.	38.29	0.029	
	Social media marketing has increased the visibility of their school among prospective parents.	45.51	0.000	
Gender	Social media marketing builds trust and credibility among parents regarding school.	30.48	0.000	
	Social media allows to clarify doubts and communicate directly with parents.	63.00	0.004	
	Social media marketing has increased the visibility of their school among prospective parents.	3.39	0.010	
	Social media marketing builds trust and credibility among parents regarding school.	60.55	0.047	

Work Experience	Social media allows to clarify doubts and communicate directly with parents.	62.34	0.030	
	Social media marketing has increased the visibility of their school among prospective parents.	26.09	0.000	

7. CONCLUSION

It is evident that school management in India increasingly recognizes the strategic importance and positive influence of social media marketing in the school enrolment process. The belief that social media builds trust and credibility among parents highlights a significant shift in how educational institutions view digital platforms. Traditionally reliant on word-of-mouth or physical promotional activities, schools are now embracing social media as a dynamic channel for reputation management. When a school regularly shares its achievements, student successes, and faculty updates, it not only reinforces its brand but also fosters a sense of transparency and reliability. Parents today seek assurance and authenticity, and schools that maintain an active, professional, and engaging social media presence are perceived as more trustworthy and forward-thinking.

Moreover, school management strongly believes that social media enables direct and timely communication with parents, allowing them to clarify doubts and provide updates more effectively. This two-way communication is vital in today's fast-paced environment where parents expect instant responses and clear information. The ability to address queries in real-time through comments, messages, and posts strengthens the school-parent relationship and makes the admission process more interactive and informative. Schools that are responsive and open in their communication are often preferred by parents who value engagement and accessibility in their children's educational environment. Social media thus functions as more than a promotional tool—it serves as a bridge between school authorities and stakeholders.

Additionally, the perception that social media marketing has significantly increased the visibility of schools among prospective parents underlines its role as a powerful outreach mechanism. Through platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, schools are able to showcase their infrastructure, academic excellence, extracurricular achievements, and community involvement to a much broader audience. Unlike traditional methods that are geographically limited, social media offers an expansive and targeted reach, enabling schools to connect with parents across cities and socio-economic backgrounds. The increased visibility leads not only to a higher number of enquiries but also positions the school as modern, accessible, and competitive in an ever-evolving educational landscape.

Overall, school management in India acknowledges social media marketing as an indispensable part of their enrolment strategy. Its ability to build credibility, foster communication,

and enhance visibility makes it a multifaceted tool that supports both the marketing and relational goals of schools. As digital literacy among parents continues to grow, schools that invest in thoughtful, consistent, and engaging social media practices are likely to gain a competitive edge in attracting and retaining students.

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